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ABSTRACT

The relationship between hostility toward women and the character traits of impulsivity, anger and psychopathology were examined. The intent was to examine males' perception of the world (personality) and their construction of reality to provide some insight into what contributes to hostility and violence against women. Four-hundred eighty college males were administered a questionnaire that consisted of several instruments measuring the mentioned character traits (The Hostility Toward Women Questionnaire, Barratt Impulsivity Scale, The State-Trait Anger Expression Inventory, and MMPI-2: Psychopathic Deviancy Scale (Scale 4) and Schizophrenia Scale (Scale 8)). The results indicate that males who have high hostility toward women are also angry and have some psychopathic traits. Therefore, men who are most likely to be hostile toward women are also more deviant and antisocial, aggressive, and frequently experience and express anger. Impulsivity was not predictive of hostility toward women. The findings are supportive of previous research linking hostility to anger and deviancy. Thus, interventions which focus on anger management and attitude change toward women may be particularly effective in minimizing the occurrence of violence against women. Contains 55 references. (Author/JBJ)

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Factors Which Predict Hostility Toward Women: Implications for Counseling

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Abstract

The relationship between hostility toward women and the character traits of impulsivity, anger and psychopathology were examined. Four-hundred and eighty college males were administered a questionnaire that consisted of several instruments measuring the mentioned character traits. The results indicate that males who have high hostility toward women are also angry and have some psychopathic traits. Therefore, men who are most likely to be hostile toward women are also more deviant and antisocial, aggressive and frequently experience and express anger. Impulsivity was not predictive of hostility toward women. The findings are supportive of previous research linking hostility to anger and deviancy. Thus, interventions which focus on anger management and attitude change toward women may be particularly effective in minimizing the occurrence of violence against women.

Factors Which Predict Hostility Toward Women: Implications for Counseling

Aggression and hostility, particularly against women, in our society is a pervasive problem and it's impact is of grave concern for the emotional health and welfare of developing children. Until recently, the literature on hostility and aggression has largely ignored the issue of male hostility and aggression toward women. Aggression theorists (e.g., Bandura, 1973; Buss, 1961; Feshbach, 1964; Zillmann, 1979) have generally conceptualized hostility as a general trait measure, primarily relevant to male-to-male aggressivity. As a consequence, researchers and theorists have made few attempts to examine the generalizability of their theories to male hostility and aggression against women.

While laboratory-assessed male-to-female aggression may be less likely to occur than male-to-male aggression (Bandura, 1962; Buss, 1961, 1963, 1971; Kagan, 1964; Taylor & Smith, 1974), in the real world there is clear evidence of aggression against women in the form of rape, spousal battering and sexual harassment. In 1981, the number of forcible rapes reported to the police in the United States was 81,536 (U.S. Department of Justice, 1983). In the same year, the National Crime Survey, based on a victimization survey of 60,000 households, estimated the number of rapes at 178,000 (U.S. Department of Justice, 1983). Two research studies examining general aggression reported more aggression against opposite-sex targets than against same-sex targets (Jaffe, Malamuth, Feingold & Feshbach, 1974; Titley & Viney, 1969).

In studies of married women, using face-to-face interviews, 34 percent to 59 percent of women reported sexual assault by their husbands (Koss, et al, 1990). In college populations, the estimated rate of forcing a woman to engage in unwanted sexual contact is around 57.3%, and the rate of admission to forcing a woman to have intercourse is around 7% (Muehlenhard & Linton, 1987). Research has found that annually 5 million American wives have been chronically and severely beaten (Rosenbaum & O'Leary, 1981; Straus, et

al., 1980). Estimates indicate that as many as one-half of all marriages experience violent incidents (Straus, Gelles, & Steinmetz, 1980; Walker, 1979). In comparison, studies have found higher rates of partner aggression among co-habituating couples than among married couples (Koss, et al, 1994). It has been found that women who have experienced severe violence at their mates hands were much more likely to express extreme levels of distress, including an overwhelming sense of danger, intrusive memories or flashbacks and thoughts of suicide (Koss, et al, 1994).

The awareness of sexual harassment, especially within the workplace, has indicated the degree to which male attitudes and hostility impact women. Koss, et al (1994) found that as many as one out of every two women over the course of their working lives experience sexual harassment. In addition, women are much more likely than men to believe that sexual harassment is a serious problem.

A number of researchers have theorized about the role of hostility toward women in rape and other aggressive acts against women (e.g., Brownmiller, 1975; Check & Malamuth, 1983, 1985; Groth, Burgess, & Holstrom, 1977; Malamuth, 1981; Russell, 1975). Brownmiller (1975) argues that one of the primary motivating factors in rape is hostility toward women. Check, Malamuth, Elias and Barton (1985) found that men who score high on hostility (using the Hostility Toward Women Questionnaire) tend to believe that men and women are essentially adversaries in their sexual relationships with each other, tend to have traditional sex-role beliefs and tend to believe in various rape myths. They also admit to the use of various levels of force in their attempts to get women to have sex, and may become angry when women reject them. They also found that men who score high on this hostility scale report finding explicit depictions of rape and sexually violent videotapes more stimulating and entertaining than men who score low on the scale. Rapaport and Burkhart (1984) surveyed 201 college males and found that adversarial sexual beliefs, acceptance of interpersonal violence and endorsement of force were all

predictive of sexual coercion. They suggested from these findings that sexually coercive males act on a system of values which legitimize aggression.

Calhoun, Kelley, Amick, and Gardner (1986) compared coercive and noncoercive men on measures of aggressive and antisocial behavioral history, conduct disorder symptomology, socialized aggression, anger and anger expression. They found that the coercive men were higher on each of these measures, suggesting that the aggressiveness seen in relationships is not limited to sexual aggression. Many researchers have compared convicted rapists to males involved in acquaintance sexual coercion. One similarity is the hostility toward women. Groth (1979) reports that the second most frequent type of rapists (approximately 40%) is the "anger" rapist; it is evident that anger is closely related to the trait of hostility. Crossman (1988) examined the characteristics of anger and hostility toward women in college males who were involved in sexual aggression. Results of the study indicated that males who scored high on anger/aggression and hostility toward women predicted involvement in sexual aggression better than either variable alone.

Another factor that has been related to male aggression is the characteristic of impulsivity (Petty & Dawson, 1989), which has been tied to the characteristics of anger, hostility and aggression. Petty and Dawson (1989) found that men who used force in sexual experiences were more impulsive than those who used less or no force. They hypothesized that impulsivity may play a larger part in the use of sexual force in college men than in convicted rapists. Barratt and Patton (1983) have concluded that episodic aggression is related in their system of personality to the first order personality traits of anger/hostility and impulsiveness or impulse control. Liska and Roth (1988) similarly found that sexually aggressive men differed from nonsexually aggressive and nonaggressive men in that they had greater levels of impulsivity. Barratt et al. (1990) proposed that anger/hostility is the main "impulse motive" system that interacts with an "impulse control" system in episodic aggression. This two system approach was consistent with a number of human studies (Muhlbauer, 1985; Soubrie, 1986). Therefore,

episodic aggression is seen as a function of a balance between the motive system of anger/hostility and a control/impulsive system. Barratt et al. (1990) presented data consistent with individuals demonstrating impulsive aggression, which involved a balance between levels of impulsiveness or impulse control and anger/hostility.

The MMPI has been frequently used to examine pathology in criminals and convicted sex offenders, as well as to attempt to distinguish between different categories of sex offenders. The Psychopathic Deviant (Pd) Scale is the most used scale in studies of sex offenders, violent offenders and substance abusers. Some authors have reported that the psychopathic deviant/schizophrenia profile is common to aggressive criminals, including rapists. Rapaport and Burkhart (1984) reasoned, based on their research, that sexual aggression was part of a general antisocial style and predicted that sexually coercive men should manifest more frequent and more intense nonsexual antisocial conduct. Rapaport (1984) found that sexually aggressive males were much more likely to have histories of antisocial conduct of all types. Therefore, she concluded that sexually aggressive males are characterized by both a general antisocial stance and a misogynistic attitudinal structure.

Erikson, Luxenburg, Walbek and Seely (1987) found that sex offenders showed more psychopathic deviant/masculine profiles (11.3% vs. 1.9% for prisoners generally) and psychotic deviant/schizophrenia (14.4% vs. 6.8% generally) profiles than other prisoner groups. Rader (1977) found in a group of rapists, exhibitionists and non-sexual assault criminals, that the rapists scored significantly higher than the other two groups on the Psychopathic Deviant scale and Schizophrenia scales. Psychoticism, measured using the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire, was found to be a predictor of sexual aggression (Malamuth, 1986), and to be related to accepting rape myths, likelihood of raping, and actual involvement in sexual aggression (Check & Guloien, in press).

The purpose of this study was to examine the construct of hostility toward women, as measured by the Hostility Toward Women Scale (Check, Malamuth, Elias, and Barton,

1985), to determine the relationship other personality traits have to hostility toward women and how these traits predict male hostility toward women. The intent of this study was to examine male's perception of the world (personality) and their construction of reality to provide some insight into what contributes to hostility and violence against women.

Method

Subject. Four hundred and eighty male students from a large southwestern university participated in this study. Undergraduate students were used because the incidence of sexual aggression has been found to be high on college campuses. The sample was drawn from students taking courses in psychology and educational psychology. The courses chosen encompassed a cross-section of the student body in terms of major and student body, due to the general nature of the classes. The mean age of the subjects was 19.2 years (SD=1.77). Approximately eighty percent of the subjects were Caucasian, 2.3% were African-American, 10.4% were Hispanic, and 4.8 were Asian.

Instruments. A questionnaire was constructed composed of the following sections: background information (age, ethnicity, classification and year in school), a measure of hostility toward women, a measure of anger, a measure of impulsivity, and measures of psychopathology).

Dependent Measure. The Hostility Toward Women Questionnaire. This measure was devised by Check, Malamuth, Elias and Barton (1985). It contains 30 items in which the subjects respond either true or false. It was constructed under the assumption that this hostility was no different from general hostility "except that it is directed specifically toward women" (Check, Malamuth, Elias & Barton, 1985). The questionnaire was devised using a total of 118 non-redundant items from scales existing in the literature that were rewritten to refer to women. The 30 true-false items with the highest item-total correlations were selected for the Hostility Toward Women scale. The researchers obtained a .89 KR-20 reliability from this 30 item scale.

Independent Measures. Barratt Impulsivity Scale. The Barratt Impulsivity Scale (BIS) was first developed by Barratt in 1965 through factor analysis, and has since been revised 11 times. The forms of the BIS were based primarily on empirical item analyses and multivariate studies. Barratt (1990a) proposes that impulsive aggression involves a balance between levels of impulsiveness or impulse control and anger/hostility. Barratt (1985), through his research on impulsivity, outlined three subdimensions of impulsiveness as subscales: a) motor impulsiveness (IM) - the tendency to act without thinking; b) cognitive impulsiveness (IC) - the tendency to make-up one's mind quickly; c) non-planning impulsiveness (INP) - the tendency to "live for the moment" and not plan ahead. The Cronbach alphas for data from the subtraits were .87, .91, and .86 in a previous study by Barratt (1985). Barratt states that the BIS-10 Score is the sum of the three subtraits and is more reliable than using any of the subscale scores, which are not orthogonal.

The State-Trait Anger Expression Inventory. This is a 44 item inventory, developed by Spielberger (1988), that provides concise measures of the experience and expression of anger. It is divided into several subscales: a) Anger-Out, b) Anger-In, c) Anger Control, d) Anger Expression, e) and Angry Temperament. This scale also has the subscales of Trait Anger, which measures individual differences in the disposition to experience anger, and State Anger, which measures the intensity of angry feelings at a particular time. Spielberger (1988) in a previous study reported internal consistency reliability of .92 for State Anger, .83 for Trait Anger, .84 for Angry Temperament scale scores and .75 for Angry Reaction scale scores. Internal consistency reliability for Anger-In scale scores was reported to be .72, Anger-Out was .62, and Anger Control was .58.

MMPI-2: Psychopathic Deviancy Scale (Scale4) and Schizophrenia Scale (Scale 8). These scales were developed as measures of psychopathology. Scale 4, which has 50 items, was developed to identify individuals with psychopathic personalities, or individuals who are amoral or asocial. High scores are indicative of individuals who are impulsive, immature, insensitive, hostile and are likely to predict some conflict with authority.

Graham (1990) states that Scale 4 is related to age, with some normal adolescents groups and college students tending to score slightly higher scores on this scale, a T-score range of 55 to 60. One way to conceptualize this scale is to think of it as a measure of rebelliousness, with higher scores indicating rebellion and lower scores indicating acceptance of authority (Graham, 1990). The highest scorers on the scale rebel by acting out in antisocial or criminal ways.

Scale 8, which contains 78 items, was developed to identify individuals diagnosed with schizophrenia. It also, however, identifies a heterogeneous group of disorders characterized by disturbances of thinking, mood and behavior. Ambivalent or constricted emotional responsiveness is common, along with feeling misunderstood and behaving in ways that may be withdrawn, aggressive or bizarre (Graham, 1990).

Procedure. The subjects volunteered to participate by signing up on sign-up sheet advertising participation in a study involving dating experiences. The subjects were tested either during scheduled class time or in a large auditorium. They were widely separated so that no one was sitting directly beside someone else, to ensure privacy. Subjects were informed of the purpose of the research, participated voluntarily, and filled out an informed consent form. Confidentiality was maintained through numerical coding.

All subjects were asked to fill out the questionnaire containing all of the instruments. The questionnaires were presented in counter-balanced order to prevent the questions from contaminating responses to other questions. All questions were answered anonymously and instructions were given by the researcher, who is female. The sets of questionnaires for each individual were given a code. The subjects used scantron sheets to fill in their responses to the questionnaire, their demographic information and their individual code.

Results

First a reliability analysis for each of the instruments was calculated using coefficient alpha, along with item-total statistics for the five instruments. Dawis (1987) states that "reliability is a function of sample as well as of instrument, [and] it should be evaluated

on a sample from the intended target population--an obvious but sometimes overlooked point" (p.486). The implications and limiting effects of not calculating a reliability analysis are exposed by Snyder, Lawson, Thompson, Strickland, and Sexton (1993, p. 218):

> Reliability coefficients for the data obtained on study instruments used in the empirical investigation prospectively provide a basis for determining, a priori, whether a proposed study and substantiative analyses are even plausible. These coefficients also allow the researcher to retrospectively interpret obtained effect sizes (e.g., r^2) against the ceiling created by the reliability coefficients obtained in a study.

It was important to empirically evaluate the reliability of the scores in this data set, even though previous measurement studies of the instruments have been conducted, because it is incorrect to say that "the test is reliable"; rather, scores or data have these characteristics. As Rowley (1976, p. 53) notes, "it needs to be established that an instrument itself is neither reliable nor unreliable." Sax (1980, p. 261) explains,

> Tests cannot be stable or unstable, but observations can. Any reference to the "reliability of a test" should always be interpreted to mean the "reliability of measurements or observations [i.e., a particular set of data] derived from a test."

As Thompson (1992, p. 436) emphasizes,

> This is not just an issue of sloppy speaking--the problem is that sometimes we unconsciously come to think what we say or what we hear, so that sloppy speaking does sometimes lead to a more pernicious outcome, sloppy thinking and sloppy practice.

Because scores are reliable (rather than tests), it was important to investigate the reliability of the scores for the data in the present study. The item-total statistics indicate the corrected item-total correlation between item responses and a score derived from all the other items on the measure, and the alpha- if-the-item-was-deleted for each item. The

internal consistency reliability for the Hostility Toward Women Questionnaire was .81, for the Barratt Impulsivity Scale was .72, for the State-Trait Anger Expression Inventory subscales ranged from .93 to .72, for the MMPI-2 Psychopathic Deviant Scale was .60, for the MMPI-2 Schizophrenia Scale was .89.

Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were calculated among the variables. The correlations ranged from .52 to .31, $p < .01$. To assess the degree to which the independent variables successfully predict hostility toward women, a multiple regression analysis was conducted. The multiple R for the 5 variables and the criterion variable of hostility toward women was .62346 (F=60.27911, p<.0000). The percentage of variance in hostility toward women accounted for by the independent variables was 38.87% ($.62346^2$), with an adjusted R square of .38225. The beta weights and structure coefficients for each independent variable are presented in Table 1. The predictor variables contributing the most to predicting hostility toward women, according to the beta weights and structure coefficients, were Schizophrenia, Trait Anger, State Anger, and Psychopathic Deviancy. In reviewing the structure coefficients (Thompson & Borrello, 1985), the variables which contributed the highest individual variance to hostility toward women are: Schizophrenia, Trait Anger, Psychopathic Deviancy, and State Anger.

INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

Discussion

These results indicate that males who are most likely to be hostile towards women are also more deviant and antisocial, have poor judgment, are frequently angry, experience and express intense anger, and the intensity of anger expressed varies as a function of perceived injustice, attack or unfair treatment by others, and frustration resulting from barriers to goal-directed behavior. These males tend to be hostile, easily frustrated, and aggressive,

which can be expressed in aggressive ways toward females, are self-centered, withdrawn, avoid deep relationships, are dissatisfied and feel incompetent. Males who are hostile towards women are also quick tempered and readily express their angry feelings with little provocation. These character traits strongly predict male hostility toward women. This finding is corroborated by Calhoun et al (1986) who found that sexually coercive males justify the use of aggression against women and have the character traits of anger and anger expression.

Impulsivity was found to have a weak relationship to hostility toward women. This would indicate that expressing hostility towards women is not an impulsive act, nor is it related to the characteristic of impulsivity. Therefore the aggressive and hostile acts committed against women involve some control and forethought, which may be related to a specific attitudinal style or acceptance of violence against women. Previous research actually indicates that men who have been involved in sexual aggression and physical aggression against women have an acceptance of interpersonal violence against women, adversarial sex beliefs, and endorse the use of force with women (Burt, 1980; Check & Malamuth, 1981). This result is contrary to the previous findings which have linked impulsivity (Barratt Impulsivity Scale, 1990) to measures of hostility and anger (Petty & Dawson, 1989; Liska & Roth, 1988).

There are several explanations for what may cause men to be violent towards women. Subotnik (1988) states that a prevalence of powerlessness and the fear of feeling powerless could be a personality characteristic developed in childhood or could be a response to difficult economic and social circumstances in later life. Dinnerstein (1976) states that child-rearing practices that define women as the sole source of nurture may produce in sons a life-long ambivalence toward women. The adult male may still experience residual feelings of infant helplessness toward the all-powerful mother image of women. Violence against children, such as corporal punishment, is accepted in the guise of discipline, and only when physical injury results is it labeled as abuse, and even that is epidemic. Such

violence can lead to powerless feelings, which are rekindled by stress in adult life (Miller, 1983).

The implications of this examination would be to create changes sociologically and characterlogically to prevent further violence in our homes, schools and communities. The men's awareness movement offers a change in the social values that idealize masculine power in the face of the realities of interdependency. The feminist influence against sex-role stereotypes in child-rearing, early education, and adult self-concept, may eventually aid in resolving the contradictions between stereotypes of masculine behavior and the realities of human emotion (Subotnik, 1988).

The implications of this study indicate that psychoeducational interventions could be implemented among school age children and families to manage anger and hostility, as well as change attitudes toward women. Prevention strategies for children and adults could focus on learning and internalizing adaptive and nonviolent modes of interpersonal conflict resolution and coping with anger. Strategies for adults and families could focus on attribution and conflict-resolution strategies of individuals and couples. Parents could be educated on the harmful effects of violence in the home on children. These effects being that a history of victimization increases the likelihood that someone will become a perpetrator of crime, violence, or abuse (Finkelhor & Dziuba-Leatherman, 1994). Emotional development, the formation of deeper intimate relationships and improved self-esteem should also be promoted through parent education.

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Table 1

Beta Weights and Structure Coefficients for the Multiple Regression Analysis Using Hostility Toward Women as the Dependent Variable

Variable	beta Weights	Structure Coefficients
Schizophrenia Scale	.249	.831
Trait Anger	.231	.778
Psychopathic Deviant Scale	.147	.754
State Anger	.162	.710
Impulsivity Scale	.020	.494

Note. The 5 independent variables have been sorted by the absolute values of the structure coefficients.